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**Adapting NATO's Deterrence Posture:
The Alliance's New Strategic Concept and Implications
for Nuclear Policy, Non-Proliferation, Arms Control,
and Disarmament**

A Report on the Workshop in Tallinn, 4-6 May 2011

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June 2011

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**Adapting NATO's Deterrence Posture:
The Alliance's New Strategic Concept and
Implications for Nuclear Policy,
Non-Proliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament:
A Report on the Workshop in Tallinn, 4-6 May 2011**

by David S. Yost*

On 4-6 May 2011 the Estonian Ministry of Defense hosted and co-sponsored a workshop in Tallinn concerning the challenges of adapting NATO's deterrence posture in light of the new Strategic Concept approved at the November 2010 Lisbon Summit.¹ The workshop focused on issues likely to figure in the NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) commissioned at the Lisbon Summit. The main points raised in the discussions were as follows:

- The DDPR will examine the full range of capabilities, but it must look beyond capabilities to the political dimension of deterrence.
- The Alliance's deterrence and defense posture should be strengthened not only in order to prevent aggression against the Allies but also in view of their responsibilities outside the NATO area.
- While the NATO Allies choose for multiple reasons not to name publicly the objects of their deterrence efforts, they should be frank in their internal deliberations.

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¹ The principal co-sponsor was the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. The workshop was organized in coordination with the Nuclear Policy Directorate at NATO HQ, with the assistance of Science Applications International Corporation.

- Cyber capabilities pose an array of unprecedented and unresolved challenges for NATO deterrence strategy and operations.
- The Alliance's deterrence and defense policy should encompass space security issues.
- The continuing decline in NATO European defense spending makes the achievement of reduced reliance on nuclear deterrence doubtful.
- The DDPR should consider whether and how the Alliance could articulate a clearer and more effective declaratory nuclear deterrence policy.
- Workshop participants differed on whether NATO can or should offer negative security assurances.
- Missile defenses could contribute to deterrence in multiple ways but cannot provide a substitute for Alliance nuclear deterrence forces in the foreseeable future.
- Workshop participants disagreed as to whether missile defenses could provide a substitute for nuclear sharing arrangements.
- Workshop participants differed regarding the importance of sustaining long-standing arrangements for risk- and responsibility-sharing in nuclear deterrence.
- The possible consequences of an end to nuclear sharing could include an erosion of assurance, a weakening of deterrence, and an end to meaningful consultations on nuclear deterrence policy.
- Certain factors point toward continuity in NATO's nuclear deterrence posture in Europe.
- Some American workshop participants highlighted the importance of continuity in nuclear sharing responsibilities for deterrence and solidarity with the United States.
- The Allies differ in their priorities concerning nuclear deterrence and arms control and disarmament.
- Russia values its non-strategic nuclear forces highly because of its conventional military weakness in relation to NATO and China and because of the U.S. pursuit of non-nuclear strategic strike systems, missile defenses, and network-centric warfare.
- The Russians have established multiple conditions for arms control affecting non-strategic nuclear forces.

The following report elaborates on these key conclusions.

Key Insights and Observations

The DDPR will examine the full range of capabilities, but it must look beyond capabilities to the political dimension of deterrence.

An American said that the Alliance in the DDPR “will not re-open any of the questions settled in the new Strategic Concept.” It is, he noted, “misleading” to label the DDPR “NATO’s Nuclear Posture Review” because it will examine the “full range of capabilities,” including nuclear, conventional, missile defense, counter-CBRN, counter-cyber, and counter-terrorist means.

Another American said that the focus on capabilities neglects the political dimension of deterrence. To deter possible adversaries effectively, he said, the Allies need to understand their motives and intentions. The Allies must study patterns of behavior and trends in order to define more politically astute strategies of deterrence.

The Alliance’s deterrence and defense posture should be strengthened not only in order to prevent aggression against the Allies but also in view of their responsibilities outside the NATO area.

An American said that the Alliance has to be concerned with deterrence not only in order to prevent aggression against the Allies but also to support its aspiration to be able “to project power in regions of WMD concern.”

Another American noted that NATO deploys forces outside the NATO area, and that these distant operations may be undertaken where “adjoining powers may have nuclear weapons and allies with nuclear weapons.” How are the NATO forces to be provided nuclear deterrence protection?

A Spanish participant said in this regard that “the next step” beyond U.S. extended deterrence protection to NATO Europe should be “NATO extended deterrence” — that is, the Alliance offering protection to non-NATO security partners involved in NATO operations.

“During the Cold War,” an American participant said, “NATO had a single mission: to deter aggression, prevent war and, if both failed, defend Alliance territory and populations and restore the status quo ante.” In the post-Cold War era, the Alliance’s objectives have expanded, and it now requires capabilities “to deter threats of aggression against NATO, prevent war, and defend against attacks and emerging security challenges; help deter, prevent and, possibly, counter hostile intentions and acts of others against others; and deter and prevent others from interfering with NATO’s willingness and ability to act.”

An American said that NATO is more likely to have to deter a “weak rogue” than a “peer competitor.” North Korea attacked South Korean targets twice in 2010, and demonstrated that a state can use nuclear weapons as a shield for conventional aggression. “How can NATO deter that and deal with conventional aggression and control escalation?”

A British participant said that “scenarios in the Middle East are more likely than scenarios involving Russia.” In his view, although today there are divisions in NATO about dealing with Russia, the divisions of the future will concern “how we view intervention if there is a threat of nuclear attack.” In such circumstances, he said, there may be “different fault lines in NATO.” An American said that there could then be “a temptation to neo-isolationism” rather than intervention by NATO.

While the NATO Allies choose for multiple reasons not to name publicly the objects of their deterrence efforts, they should be frank in their internal deliberations.

An American participant highlighted “the difficulty of deterring potential adversaries that you cannot designate publicly.”

A Lithuanian participant noted that the 2010 Strategic Concept did not repeat the following statement from the 1999 Strategic Concept: “The existence of powerful nuclear forces outside the Alliance also constitutes a significant factor which the Alliance has to take into account if security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are to be maintained.”² He said that even this subtle reference to Russia as a potential threat to NATO had become “unfashionable.” As a result, he said, NATO has “a policy in search of a clear mission,” because Russia “cannot be named” as a potential threat, even obliquely. Some NATO Allies have incentives to avoid alienating potential adversaries – and, indeed, to cultivate positive political relations with them – while sustaining and improving the Alliance’s deterrence and defense posture.

An American participant said that, in formulating deterrence policy, the Alliance needs to consider a basic question: “Whom are we trying to deter from doing what to whom?” This is essential because “real life comes with details.” As a result, “One could say that the phrase ‘tailored deterrence’ is repetitively redundant: All deterrence is specific to an adversary and what they value, and the particular situation (and their and our stakes in it).”

This American participant noted, “NATO can’t or won’t name adversaries.” NATO treats its potential adversaries like Lord Voldemort in the Harry Potter series. This villain is often called “You-Know-Who” or “He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.” NATO’s attitude, at least with regard to public discussions, this American participant continued, seems to be “the less said about potential threats, the better.” This is not necessarily a problem for deterrence, however, because each potential adversary is likely to think

² North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 21.

that “it’s all about me” — “whether it is or not, whether NATO says it is or not.” As a result, “NATO may be able to deter specific actors without naming them.”

A Turkish participant said that “to whom it may concern” deterrence might work, in view of the precedent set by criminal codes. He noted that murder is prohibited, and no potential murderers are named and no steps are taken to communicate messages to the more probable murderers. This is a contrast with the concept of “tailored deterrence.”

An American participant said that NATO has “to whom it may concern” deterrence as its public policy. In their internal deliberations, however, the NATO Allies “need to think about the who” and “be a little franker with themselves.”

Similarly, a British participant said that in the DDPR the Allies should “be as precise as they can in intra-Alliance debate: name names and places, local force ratios, and reinforcement times. The euphemisms and the discreet charm of the diplomatic corps should come later, at the presentation stage.”

A British participant said that the Alliance is constrained in naming adversaries not only by diplomatic sensitivities but also by “a very basic problem.” That is, “The Allies don’t have agreement on a range of threats and how to handle them.” As a result, the Allies leave “ambiguous” the question of whom they wish to deter, and they hold that ambiguity is “best” for alliance cohesion and perhaps also for deterrence.

Cyber capabilities pose an array of unprecedented and unresolved challenges for NATO deterrence strategy and operations.

An American participant said that the Stuxnet attack on Iran raises questions for NATO. “Was that a preventive use of force like Osirak in 1981? It appears to have been an effective targeted attack with limited collateral damage.” He said that NATO should consider whether and how to develop a capability to conduct offensive cyber operations. However, he added, “The Allies don’t want to talk about it. It is taboo, compared to defensive cyber security. NATO has no common doctrine on cyber offense.”

An Estonian participant said that the probability of cyber attack for NATO nations is close to 100 percent, but cyber attacks can be hard to recognize and accurately characterize. When Estonia was attacked in 2007, national leaders asked, “Who is attacking?” The honest answer was, “We don’t know. We don’t have a proof, and we can’t identify any single party.” Estonia is still analyzing the data from the 2007 attacks.

An Estonian participant said that “national security planners have begun to look beyond reactive, tactical cyber defense to proactive, strategic cyber defense. Cyber security strategies are emerging together with awareness and capabilities.” However, he said, it is an open and important question whether “the two most challenging aspects of cyber attacks – attribution and asymmetry – will make cyber attack

deterrence an impossible task.”

The attribution problem “undermines the ability to respond and deter.” For the risk of punishment to be credible, “the victim must be able to prove the identity of the attacker,” who “enjoys the advantage of anonymity.”

The asymmetry problem resides in the fact that “civilian infrastructure could be turned into an offensive tool in seconds.” This is one of the implications of “young men without a future” gaining access to the Internet.

An American participant said that cyber attacks raise the question, “Is this a prelude to something else?” The cyber attacks might prepare the way for a terrorist attack or a conventional assault. An Estonian said that all future conflicts will involve “hybrid attacks” in that they will have a cyber component.

A French participant said that MC 14/3 offers a “helpful” and “commonsensical” conceptual framework that the Allies could benefit from. Concepts in this document such as “direct defense” and “deliberate escalation” could, for example, apply to cyber contingencies.

The Alliance’s deterrence and defense policy should encompass space security issues.

A Spanish participant argued that the Alliance should adopt a more unified and explicit policy about the security of the space systems that NATO forces depend upon in their operations. It was a positive sign, he said, that the 2010 Strategic Concept stated that “A number of significant technology-related trends – including the development of laser weapons, electronic warfare and technologies that impede access to space – appear poised to have major global effects that will impact on NATO military planning and operations.”³ In his view, it is nonetheless regrettable that the Alliance has not yet established a space command or even an office dedicated to space security issues. He noted that Allied Command Transformation requested the NATO space operations study completed in 2009 by the Joint Air Power Competence Centre,⁴ and recommended that the Alliance dedicate more attention to space security issues, including the policies and capabilities of powers such as China. It is important that NATO be capable of deterring attacks on space assets.

³ North Atlantic Council, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, November 19, 2010, par. 14, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm.

⁴ Thomas Single, *NATO Space Operations Assessment* (Kalkar, Germany: Joint Air Power Competence Centre, January 2009), available at www.japcc.org.

The continuing decline in NATO European defense spending makes the achievement of reduced reliance on nuclear deterrence doubtful.

An American participant questioned whether the Alliance will be able to significantly diminish its dependence on nuclear deterrence, in view of the uncertain funding prospects for missile defense and the declining defense budgets of most European NATO Allies. A French participant said that NATO's reliance on nuclear deterrence is actually increasing, owing to European NATO defense budget cutbacks and conventional force reductions, the shrinkage of the U.S. military presence in Europe, and the deployment of forces in missions outside Europe, notably in Afghanistan.

A French participant said that the idea that conventional forces could play a greater role in deterrence is "hindered by defense budgets in Europe." The cutbacks in defense spending by most European NATO Allies mean "a de facto increase in the U.S. contribution to European security." In other words, he said, "Some Allies want to rely more on non-nuclear deterrence, but they are not willing to pay for it."

A British participant said that European NATO governments have manifested "virtually nil" appetite for increased defense spending or for the "smart defense" solutions of combining facilities and pooling the procurement and maintenance of capabilities. As a result, he said, "We Europeans are at a very low ebb." NATO European defense spending is "only a third" that of United States.⁵ The cuts in conventional capabilities imply increased reliance on nuclear deterrence, he said, but some European Allies are showing an unwillingness to sustain nuclear-sharing responsibilities.

An American participant said that the Alliance may face "problems of credibility if the asymmetry grows" between the military contributions of the United States and its allies. If the Allies fail to contribute, he said, "it reflects on their capability and willingness," and "the asymmetry could become structurally destructive."

A Lithuanian participant noted that the 2010 Strategic Concept stated with regard to arms control and disarmament that "NATO seeks its security at the lowest possible level of forces."⁶ He said that this is "probably an inside joke" and "the one objective

⁵ According to the NATO Secretary General, "Ten years ago, the United States accounted for just under half of NATO members' total defence spending. Today the American share is closer to 75 percent – and it will continue to grow, even with the new cuts in the Pentagon's spending." Anders Fogh Rasmussen, speech at the Munich Security Conference, 4 February 2011, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_70400.htm.

⁶ North Atlantic Council, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, November 19, 2010, par. 26, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm.

NATO is set to achieve with a resounding success" in view of the continuing defense budget reductions by most European NATO members.

There is, a Lithuanian participant added, "a growing gap between the European Union's self-image as a global strategic actor and its actual capabilities," which are "plummeting." EU member states talk about boosting their Common Security and Defense Policy, their European Defense Agency, and their battle groups, and then proceed to cut their defense spending. In reality, he said, they are "addicts of American protection."

The DDPR should consider whether and how the Alliance could articulate a clearer and more effective declaratory nuclear deterrence policy.

With regard to declared nuclear deterrence doctrine, an American recalled that the 1999 Strategic Concept stated that "The fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfil an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression. They demonstrate that aggression of any kind is not a rational option."⁷ In contrast, the American participant noted, "The new Strategic Concept includes no similar general theory of how deterrence is to operate." This raises the question, "Should NATO adopt some formulation to explain its general framework for deterrence?"

A Lithuanian participant said that the 2010 Strategic Concept displayed a certain "conceptual degradation" manifest in its failure to discuss the requirements of deterrence, including the need for U.S. nuclear forces "in Europe." He asked, "What could possibly replace that?" In his view, "At the end of the day, the NATO posture is about the DCA arrangement. If the current arrangement goes, so does any meaningful NATO nuclear policy."

A French participant said that "NATO currently lacks a declaratory policy" for nuclear deterrence and that its policy is "too fuzzy and vague."

An American participant described the term "nonstrategic nuclear weapons" as "oxymoronic," in that all nuclear weapons are "strategic." A French participant said that U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe are in fact "strategic" in their political significance, and that the Allies should stop calling them "nonstrategic" or "tactical" weapons. These terms create an impression that these weapons have a "war-fighting" purpose when they do not: "None of our nuclear weapons is a war-fighting weapon."

Workshop participants differed on whether NATO can or should offer negative security assurances.

⁷ North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 62.

In view of the differing negative security assurances of Britain, France, and the United States, a Frenchman said, the Alliance should strive to craft "a common policy rather than a single policy." For deterrence, he added, it may be "beneficial to have different NSAs rather than complete coherence and harmony."

An American participant agreed that "NATO policy needs to be consistent with the P-3 NSAs." It is nonetheless not clear whether NATO as an organization can or should articulate negative security assurances.

A German participant asked why NATO could not state negative security assurances. He said that NATO could adopt the policy of the European Union, in which the strongest standard applies. A Frenchman disagreed and asserted that in the European Union the lowest common denominator applies.

An American said that each nuclear weapon state offering NSAs decides on whether particular cases satisfy its conditions for honoring such assurances. If NATO offered NSAs, NATO would have to decide on compliance with the conditions. A Frenchman said that this could imply discussions lasting for weeks or months in the North Atlantic Council, and this situation would not be constructive for deterrence.

Missile defenses could contribute to deterrence in multiple ways but cannot provide a substitute for Alliance nuclear deterrence forces in the foreseeable future.

Participants generally agreed that missile defenses may be able to contribute to deterrence in several ways but that they cannot furnish a substitute for the Alliance's nuclear deterrence forces in the foreseeable future. For example, a German participant advocated replacing current nuclear sharing arrangements in Europe with missile defenses, but added that he supported the Strategic Concept principles holding that the Alliance requires "an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces" and that, "As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance."⁸

An American participant said that missile defenses could potentially contribute to deterrence in eight ways: (1) buying time in a crisis; (2) enhancing deterrence by denial; (3) assuring allies under attack in wartime; (4) dissuading proliferators of ballistic missiles; (5) providing an alternative to preemption or retaliation; (6) increasing freedom of action; (7) strengthening the credibility of U.S. commitments to allies and regional partners through forward deployed missile defenses; and (8) ensuring U.S. and allied technology leadership through missile defense development. A French participant added that missile defenses could sometimes offer insurance in the event of deterrence failure, and that missile defenses might be able to complement nuclear deterrence in cases in which nuclear deterrence does not apply. Another French

⁸ North Atlantic Council, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, November 19, 2010, par. 19, 17.

participant said that the contribution of missile defense to deterrence is “virtual” and “hypothetical” at present and that it will remain limited for many years to come.

An American participant said that missile defense “strengthens deterrence of states like Iran and North Korea,” but that it is “not relevant to deterrence of Russia” and “not a substitute for nuclear weapons.” Missile defense should be regarded, he said, as “a complement” to nuclear deterrence. “Iran already has more missiles than the number of interceptors we will buy.” Missile defense, however, can help in preventing coercion and “take the cheap shot off the table.”

A British participant asked what the United States expects or wants from its NATO European allies in return for providing missile defense protection for European forces, populations, and territories. Although other participants raised the same question, no clear answer was given.

Workshop participants disagreed as to whether missile defenses could provide a substitute for nuclear sharing arrangements.

A German participant said that “European air forces in a nuclear role would not be necessary to deal with the new conflicts/contingencies such as a nuclear Iran and confrontations in the Middle East. . . . At the same time, NATO and its members would need to extend its missile defense programs in order to develop an effective damage limitation option. . . . Today, the presence of US nuclear forces in Europe underscores that the US remains engaged in Europe. An end of this kind of engagement is feared by many Allies to be the beginning of the end of the entire US military engagement in Europe. At the same time, European allies value nuclear sharing because it gives them leverage within NATO's decision-making process. . . . Therefore, NATO needs to substitute nuclear sharing. The appropriate candidate is missile defenses. At Lisbon, NATO agreed to build-up an alliance-wide system to defend territories and populations. We need to take care that this program really materializes. If it does, the US would continue to be engaged in European security, including missile defenses based on European territory. NATO partners could contribute to missile defenses, thereby making sure that they continue to have a say in alliance affairs.”

An American participant said that “an effective damage limitation option” via missile defense would be far beyond what the United States and its NATO Allies envisage for missile defense, and that even the limited missile defenses that the Alliance has agreed to pursue will be much costlier than the continuation of long-standing nuclear-sharing arrangements.

A French participant said that, even if the Europeans were prepared to spend tens of billions of euros on missile defense in support of the European Phased Adaptive Approach envisaged by the United States, this would not produce “an effective damage

limitation option.” Another American participant said that it is misleading to present missile defense and nuclear-sharing as alternatives, as if one excludes the other.

An American participant said that the nuclear-sharing arrangements are “not expensive,” since the main additional cost for the Allies with delivery capabilities is for the nuclear certification of aircraft that would be procured anyway. A French participant said that the nuclear-certification of new aircraft would cost perhaps €200 million, and that this is “not much” compared to the costs of missile defense.

Workshop participants differed regarding the importance of sustaining long-standing arrangements for risk- and responsibility-sharing in nuclear deterrence.

A German participant said that, “Provided relations with Russia do not become hostile, it would be inconceivable for Germany to spend money for new aircraft in a nuclear role given that even the conservative party let alone all the other parties intend to end the stationing of US nuclear forces in Germany as soon as possible.”

A French participant asked, “Does Germany really want an end to nuclear-sharing and meaningful nuclear consultations? Is that truly acceptable for Germany?” Some Germans have even made the argument, he said, that deterrence is “old-fashioned, obsolete, and wrong.” If Germany pushes through an end to nuclear-sharing and the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe, he said, it would mean that the Alliance would “sub-contract nuclear deterrence to the P-3” — that is, Britain, France, and the United States — and the non-nuclear-weapon-state Allies would no longer be directly involved in the Alliance’s nuclear deterrence posture.

Another French participant asked, “Where is the German willingness to bear a fair share of the nuclear deterrence burden?”

Another British participant said that the Allies seem to be divided into several groups. Some Allies, such as Germany and Norway, favor movement on nuclear disarmament and hold that removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe would promote that objective. Another group of countries, including France as well as Allies in Central and Eastern Europe, constitute a “no-change camp.” For the United States, he said, the priority has become maintaining the Alliance’s “cohesion and solidarity.” In these circumstances, he said, “the arms control proponents may not be able to carry the day in the Alliance as a whole.” He concluded that “the likely outcome is continuity” and consensus on the principle that “any steps taken must strengthen and not weaken the Alliance.” If a formal decision for continuity is made, however, he added, “there will be tension with the countries that have to implement that policy.” The Bundestag and other parliaments “may refuse to pay,” and “governments are responsible to parliaments.” Without a new consensus, he said, the current posture cannot be sustained more than five to ten years.

An American participant said that the advocates of ending nuclear-sharing need to explain how withdrawing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe would bolster deterrence. If the weapons were removed, he said, this would lead to an end to meaningful burden-sharing and consultations on nuclear policy.

Another American highlighted the importance of risk- and responsibility-sharing by asking, "how viable is any deterrence strategy that depends on US generosity, manpower, and weapons systems for its credibility?" In his view, "This is particularly true for extended deterrence. . . Will revisions to the deterrence strategy include sufficient burden-sharing components to satisfy the United States, while being marketable in Europe?"

The possible consequences of an end to nuclear sharing could include an erosion of assurance, a weakening of deterrence, and an end to meaningful consultations on nuclear deterrence policy.

An American participant said that the consultation process might fail to provide effective assurance to the European Allies without nuclear sharing. "I don't know how NATO would sustain the process without shared operational responsibilities," he said. With reference to the U.S. consultations with the Japanese and the South Koreans, he added, "Talk doesn't satisfy them. Why would it be different in NATO?"

Another American said that "a weakening of extended deterrence in Europe would send a message to East Asia" at a time when NATO needs to think about upholding U.S. extended deterrence in Asia. It is in the Alliance's interest that U.S. extended deterrence guarantees in Asia remain credible and effective as means of war-prevention, assurance, and non-proliferation.

An American participant said that from a U.S. perspective "the unique nuclear sharing arrangements within NATO have continuing utility." The April 2010 Nuclear Posture Review stated, he pointed out, that "Although the risk of nuclear attack against North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members is at an historic low, the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons - combined with NATO's unique nuclear sharing arrangements under which non-nuclear members participate in nuclear planning and possess specially configured aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons - contribute to Alliance cohesion and provide reassurance to allies and partners who feel exposed to regional threats."⁹

In his view, NATO's nuclear sharing arrangements "provide assurance to Allies that the commitment to collective defense will be realized in even the most extreme

⁹ *Nuclear Posture Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 2010), p. 32.

circumstances – and that the U.S. will remain deeply engaged in Europe.” At the same time, he said, the arrangements “provide assurance to the U.S. that its allies are sharing some of the most difficult burdens that fall upon us and would be key partners in any future and immensely difficult decision regarding nuclear employment.” Because of the importance of sharing arrangements, he said, the Allies should “seek an outcome from the DDPR that shares the nuclear burden as broadly as possible.” The nuclear sharing mechanisms might include “common funding, peacetime basing, collective planning, joint exercises, and common missions.” The Allies should also, he said, seek new means of burden sharing for the Alliance’s deterrence posture, in both the nuclear and non-nuclear domains.

A Frenchman asked, “Would the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons and the end of nuclear sharing make the Alliance’s deterrence posture more credible or less credible?” In his judgment, “The likelihood of ‘less credible’ is not minimal.”

Another Frenchman said that Germany is “undoing what it achieved over previous decades” to make sure that non-nuclear-weapon-state allies are part of the Alliance’s nuclear decision-making. The German lead in promoting the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe presents a risk that nuclear deterrence policy will become a P-3 matter, with Britain, France, and the United States making all decisions and then presenting an annual summary statement to the North Atlantic Council. This would, he said, be “very damaging” for the cohesion of the Alliance compared to the nuclear-sharing arrangements. The “worst case” would be, he concluded, a withdrawal of the remaining U.S. weapons without agreement on a solid policy for the future.

A Lithuanian participant said that the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe would undermine the “three no’s” commitment to continuity in NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture.¹⁰ He noted that removing U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe would change a central aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture and pointed out that this would be inconsistent with the clause stating that the Allies have no “need to change any aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture or nuclear policy.” In his view, Central and East European NATO Allies generally want to maintain U.S. nuclear forces in Europe, together with non-nuclear military capabilities. “The more American weapons, nukes, boots, missile defense, Patriots, F-16s – anything – are on European soil, the more secure the Central and Eastern European Allies feel.” He said that he would paraphrase the title of one of President Barack Obama’s books and have “the audacity

¹⁰ “The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture or nuclear policy – and do not foresee any future need to do so.” Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, Paris, 27 May 1997, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm.

to hope that there will be no change to the American presence in Europe” as long as there is an unknown number of non-NATO nuclear weapons in Europe.

Certain factors point toward continuity in NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture in Europe.

A British participant said that “two benchmarks” constrain the Alliance’s options in modifying its nuclear deterrence posture. First, he noted, the Strategic Concept included the commitment by the Allies to “ensure the broadest possible participation of Allies in collective defence planning on nuclear roles, in peacetime basing of nuclear forces, and in command, control and consultation arrangements.”¹¹ Even without the words “in Europe” with reference to U.S. nuclear forces, he said, this “implies continuity.” Second, the Allies have agreed that future reductions in U.S. nuclear forces in Europe must involve Russian reciprocity. This has, he said, become “a key determinant,” because U.S. nuclear force reductions now depend on Russia, and the Russians are “not interested” in arms control negotiations about these weapons.

An American said, “all of the Allies need to commit the resources to maintain NATO’s nuclear deterrent – with maintenance of DCA and crews and reliable command and control, security upgrades at storage sites, and a renewal of commitment to leadership focus and institutional excellence.” In this regard he cited the Schlesinger panel report calling for “planning processes that are well exercised” and other measures to lend credibility to the Alliance’s nuclear posture for deterrence and assurance.¹²

Some American workshop participants highlighted the importance of continuity in nuclear sharing responsibilities for deterrence and solidarity with the United States.

An American participant said, “The willingness of non-nuclear-weapon-state NATO Allies to prepare to participate in, support, and plan for nuclear contingencies is a serious act and therefore sends an important message about Alliance cohesion and risk- and responsibility-sharing both to the United States and to the Alliance’s potential adversaries.”

An American participant said that the United States will in the coming decades face demands on its military resources in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions and increased costs, owing to the need to invest in precision-guided munitions and C4ISR capabilities, in an era in which U.S. government spending will come under great

¹¹ North Atlantic Council, Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, November 19, 2010, par. 17, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm.

¹² James R. Schlesinger, Chairman, *Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management, Phase II: Review of the DoD Nuclear Mission* (Arlington, Virginia: Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management, December 2008), p. 15. This report is available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/PhaseIIReportFinal.pdf>.

pressure. He asked, "Is this the kind of context in which European nations should push, even or perhaps especially symbolically, for the United States to shoulder a greater share of the overall Alliance security burden, conceived in both symbolic as well as concrete terms? If they are interested in the long-term solidarity and health of the Atlantic Alliance, I would advise them not to. Maintaining a nuclear delivery capability among the non-nuclear European NATO allies is a serious way in which the Allies demonstrate their willingness to 'get their hands dirty' for the sake of the Alliance's collective defense. . . . Better to keep these links of solidarity strong, particularly about the nuclear deterrence that has and must continue to be at the core of Allied security."

The Allies differ in their priorities concerning nuclear deterrence and arms control and disarmament.

A German participant said that many Germans see deterrence as "a dangerous thing" that "might have the effect of inciting proliferation." On the whole, he said, Germans today do not discuss deterrence but place priority on arms control and disarmament. In his view, there is "a risk of a deepening rift" among the Allies, because Germans are generally not concerned about deterrence, and certainly not to the extent that the Central and Eastern European Allies and the P-3 countries (Britain, France, and the United States) are concerned. There is, he said, "no debate" in Germany about burden-sharing in support of deterrence. "In general," he concluded, "Germany seeks to improve political relations with adversaries to make deterrence unnecessary. . . . The ideological focus on arms control leads to rather one-sided advocacy, with no debate in the elite and the public sphere about how deterrence could be made workable."

An American participant said that it is "very unhealthy" to have a dialogue on nuclear deterrence between the United States and the non-nuclear-weapon-state Allies from which Britain and France have excused themselves. This represents, he said, "a failure" by Britain and France, because they are leaving all the responsibility for upholding nuclear deterrence to the United States. The Allies must, he said, be "prepared and resolute" in upholding their mutual defense commitments, including with nuclear forces, or face the "fragmentation" of the Alliance. NATO has been, he noted, "a nuclear alliance from day one."

A Lithuanian participant said that Allied governments at some point will have to choose between maintaining nuclear deterrence arrangements in support of national and Alliance security or pursuing nuclear disarmament in order "to be popular with the NGOs and the non-aligned movement." The European Allies would prefer, he said, to see clear leadership decisions by the United States "because they are divided and they don't like making strategic choices and would rather have the Americans decide, as was the case in the good old times."

A British participant described the disagreements expressed by German, French, U.S., Lithuanian and other participants as evidence of a certain "Balkanization" of the Alliance. The NATO Allies should, he said, "not assume that rational argumentation

will win out over the observable differences in national strategic cultures within the Alliance. After all the analysis, it may be better simply to avoid proposals which would create the most bruising confrontations." This is complicated, he said, by "a hijacking of Alliance policy by Germany." In his view, Germany is taking a "Here I stand; I can do no other" position that is "uncomfortable" for its Allies and that could make the Alliance "fall apart."

An American participant said that "Germany's domestic politics can be seen from across the Atlantic as forcing Berlin toward a reduced commitment not only to NATO but also to the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy."

If Germany maintains a stance against continued participation in nuclear-sharing, an American participant said, this will have "huge implications" for all the Allies in that it could affect other Alliance arrangements and commitments. A British participant said that a German unilateral decision would be inconsistent with the German concept of the Alliance as a *Schicksalgemeinschaft*, a community of fate.

Russia values its non-strategic nuclear forces highly because of its conventional military weakness in relation to NATO and China and because of the U.S. pursuit of non-nuclear strategic strike systems, missile defenses, and network-centric warfare.

A British participant said that "underlying Russia's increasing reliance on nuclear deterrence and sub-strategic nuclear weapons is the change in how it perceives China. No longer does Moscow look east and see a mass industrial era military, but one rapidly enhancing its power projection capabilities through introducing high-tech systems and adopting its own version of network-centric approaches to warfare." When a group of Western strategic experts met with Russian counterparts recently, the Russians were asked about China, and "the room fell silent." Then a Russian said, "Do you really think that we could discuss this with anyone from NATO?" For the Russians, the British participant said, China is "the threat that dare not speak its name," and Russia fears "strategic isolation" in dealing with China.

Another British participant said that it is "commonplace" among Russian commentators that the use of tactical nuclear weapons is Moscow's only means for the "de-escalation" of a military confrontation with China. Some Russian commentators speak of this with "alarming levity."

A British participant said that Russia's level of attachment to non-strategic nuclear forces has increased over the past two years because the combat readiness of its conventional forces has been reduced by its defense reform effort.

An American participant said that Russians regard non-strategic nuclear forces as their only possible response to NATO's conventional forces, and that the Russians would try to target C4ISR nodes for precision strike forces.

A British participant said that NATO's intervention in Libya "demonstrates a scenario that some in Russia warned of — that is, NATO or the United States takes a dislike to internal processes in a country and so takes sides and goes for a military option against government forces." The Russian reaction is, he said, to rely on the country's nuclear weapons to deter such an intervention in Russia and to be cautious about negotiations concerning these weapons.

A Lithuanian participant said that for the Russians nuclear weapons retain operational value, and the Russian threshold for use is not as high as for NATO's nuclear-weapon states. In his view, this constitutes an argument for NATO to maintain U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe as a visible deterrent. The Russians, he said, consider it normal to parade Topol M ICBMs on Red Square. "Can anyone imagine a parade of Minuteman ICBMs in front of the White House?"

The Russians have established multiple conditions for arms control affecting non-strategic nuclear forces.

A British participant said that the Russians "are not going to walk easily into negotiations" on arms control for non-strategic nuclear forces. The Russians will, he said, wish first to monitor New START implementation and U.S. missile defense policy.

A French participant said that the Russians want the remaining U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe to be removed without any reciprocal step on Russia's part. Even if the Russians promised to pull back some of their nuclear weapons from comparatively close proximity to Alliance soil, they could bring them back to their original sites quickly. A NATO step to "lead by example" — that is, a removal of the remaining U.S. nuclear weapons — would be "extraordinarily hard to reverse." There is "an absolute lack of clarity" on the numbers and locations of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons.

A British participant said that the Russians hold that before any talks on non-strategic nuclear weapons can take place the United States must first withdraw its remaining nuclear weapons from Europe and dismantle the storage sites for these weapons in Europe. Furthermore, he said, the Russians want NATO to address "the disparity in conventional military forces" between NATO and Russia.

For some Russians, a British participant said, "No movement on missile defense means no movement on other issues." This Russian policy position has been repeatedly articulated since November 2010.

An American said that it is not clear what can be expected and achieved in nuclear arms control negotiations with Russia. There is "no clarity on timelines" or on Russian openness to transparency measures or verified reductions.

An American pointed out that Russian and U.S. priorities for the follow-on to the New START Treaty are "diametrically opposed." In his words, "The U.S. favors another round of bilateral negotiations that further reduce deployed strategic nuclear weapons,

and address non-deployed and non-strategic warheads. Russia has shown little interest in further reductions of strategic systems or NSNF, but has spoken of multilateral negotiations that address BMD, non-nuclear strategic systems and space weapons. In addition, Russia seems to be linking these negotiations with resolution of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty issues."

Another American said that the CFE Treaty equipment constraints "have nothing to do with modern warfare, and the Russians know it." The CFE equipment limits do not cover missiles or information systems, he noted; and the Russian assessment holds that "the United States can achieve near-nuclear effects with conventional weapons." The Russians have, he said, suspended compliance with the CFE Treaty as a way of expressing dissatisfaction with the flank limits and for other political reasons.

A British participant said that in assessing prospects for conventional and nuclear arms control negotiations with Russia the NATO Allies need to "take into account the impact of advanced precision weapons, non-nuclear strategic weapons, and the ability to conduct network warfare in creating disparities in conventional military power." This may enable the Allies to understand the Russian desires "to maintain mobile nuclear assets which can frustrate attempted pre-emption through dispersal." To this end, he suggested, the Allies should "conduct a full scale classified assessment of how the Russians really do now think about the correlation of forces, including the contribution of nuclear weapons of all classes in their competition with Alliance nations." The Allies might then "try conscientiously to address Russian and other concerns about this if CFE is to be resuscitated or new alternatives are to be created in some aspirational holistic arms control package."

Some American participants observed, as one put it, that NATO's declared objective of relocating Russian non-strategic nuclear forces away from proximity to NATO territory poses "a problem for U.S. allies in East Asia" and that "relocation poses problems for monitoring and verification as it would be difficult to detect reverse movements."

An American said that negotiated reductions in U.S. and Russian non-strategic nuclear forces "would involve difficult and complex negotiating issues, including scope and verification, especially if warheads are a unit of account."

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The participants generally agreed that the workshop was helpful in clarifying issues and renewing ties between the policy and analytical communities. A future workshop may address issues associated with the Alliance's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review after the NATO Summit in 2012.

